United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Haiti talks yield six-month political truce aimed at smooth and peaceful transition of power; United Nations and OAS to help set up conciliation commission.

+ Liberian political parties reach agreement on ending civil war, covering political, military, humanitarian and refugee issues; signing to take place at ECOWAS summit in Benin on 24 July.

+ Secretary-General welcomes progress in Western Sahara talks in Laayoune; Special Representative Yaqub-Khan available to assist parties.

+ Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, says UNPROFOR has been successful in preventive mandate in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; conclusions cannot yet be drawn on deployment's impact on situation in region.

+ Executive Chairman of Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq leaves Baghdad after "frank and useful" talks on country's refusal to permit sealing of rocket sites; will brief Security Council soon.

+ United Nations sending technical team to Georgia prior to dispatch of 50 military observers as soon as cease-fire implemented.

* Special Representative Howe says Somalia is progressing rapidly towards reconstruction of infrastructure and institutions; pledges that two thirds of UNOSOM II professional staff will be Somalis.

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Haitian political representatives meeting at Headquarters agreed on Friday to a six-month political truce in order to guarantee a smooth and peaceful transition of power in their country. The talks were a follow-up to the Governors Island Agreement concluded on 3 July by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras, Commander-in-Chief of the Haitian Armed Forces.

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In agreeing to the truce, the political forces and parliamentary blocs in Haiti undertook to promote and guarantee respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to refrain from any action that might lead to violence or disrupt the transition to democracy. They also undertook not to table motions of no-confidence against the new Government of national concord, insofar as it respected the Constitution and the laws of the Republic, or to obstruct the work of Parliament.

The signatories invited the President to appoint a new Prime Minister as soon as possible, and undertook to ensure that laws necessary for the transition of power were passed on the basis of an emergency procedure. The United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) agreed to make two experts available to help prepare and implement an act establishing a conciliation commission.

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After a week of talks aimed at ending the civil war in their country, Libera's political parties adopted an agreement on Saturday covering political, military, humanitarian and refugee issues. The agreement will be signed by the leaders of the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia (IGNU); the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL); and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy of Liberia (ULIMO) at the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit in Cotonou, Benin on 24 July.

The agreement contains conditions for a cease-fire and the establishment of a civilian transitional Government lasting seven months, after which elections will be held. The agreement also provides for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and the repatriation and reintegration of refugees under the aegis of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Geneva talks were co-chaired by Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia; Canaan Banana, Eminent Person of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Abass Bundu, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the progress made at the beginning of direct talks on Western Sahara in Laayoune, according to a United Nations spokesman. The general atmosphere at the talks was described as good and promising, despite the delicate issues being discussed.

The Secretary-General hoped that the talks would resume within the next few days, the spokesman said. Special Representative Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan had been present at the talks in the capacity of an observer and would continue to be available to the parties to help ensure a successful outcome.

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The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been successful so far in its preventive mandate in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but it it is too early to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of that deployment in the highly volatile situation prevailing in the region, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has told the Security Council in a report dated 13 July.

The Secretary-General welcomed the strengthening of UNPROFOR under Security Council resolution 842 (1993), and said the Force's presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia supported international efforts to promote peace in the former Yugoslavia. The United States' deployment of troops would strengthen confidence and stability in the Republic and show that the international community would not accept any further widening of the conflict in the region.

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Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq, has left Baghdad for Bahrain after "frank and useful" talks with senior Iraqi officials, a United Nations spokesman said today. Mr. Ekeus was in Iraq to discuss the country's refusal to allow a Commission team to seal two rocket test sites until monitoring cameras could be installed to ensure that they were not being used for prohibited purposes.

Iraq's position contained positive elements which would permit high-level talks to begin soon in New York with a view to resolving all outstanding issues, the spokesman said. Mr. Ekeus was expected to report to the Security Council soon, possibly on Wednesday.

The Council had found Iraq's previous refusal to permit the installation of cameras at the test sites to be a breach of resolution 687 (1991), which was the basis for the cease-fire after the Gulf War, and a violation of resolutions 707 (1991) and 715 (1991).

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The United Nations is sending a technical team to Georgia as a preliminary to the deployment of 50 military observers as soon as a cease-fire is implemented in the war-torn province of Abkhazia, according to a United Nations spokesman. The team is being led by former Assistant Secretary-General George Sherry of the United States.

The Security Council, in resolution 849 (1993), recently asked the Secretary-General to send his Special Envoy to Abkhazia to help implement the cease-fire agreed to on 14 May by the Georgian Government and Abkhaz separatists, and to prepare for the dispatch of the 50 military observers to the area. In a report on Abkhazia dated 1 July, the Secretary-General said that the situation was deteriorating and that the conflict could threaten the whole Caucasus region.

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Somalia is rapidly moving away from emergency relief operations into the longer-term challenge of rehabilitation and reconstruction of its infrastructure and institutions, Special Representative Jonathan Howe said today in a message to the Somali People.

Admiral Howe said there were signs of recovery and reconstruction in many sectors in Somalia: starvation had largely been eradicated; massive immunization programmes had protected children from disease; livestock exports had increased; schools were steadily reopening; and trade and commerce were growing, with hundreds of commercial ships now docking in Somali ports. He pledged that Somalis would be involved in every part of the reconstruction and rehabilitation plan, and would make up two thirds of the professional staff of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

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